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Publishing Co.

Gehlen, Reinhard

World Gets Rights to Memoirs By Gehlen and Loses an Editor

By HENRY RAYMONT

The World Publishing Company signed this week a contract for the controversial memoirs of Gen. Reinhard Gehlen, West Germany's former intelligence chief—and lost a top editor who had played a key role in obtaining them.

Completion of the negotiations that give the company world rights to the memoirs outside Germany for a reported \$500,000 became known yesterday along with conflicting versions of the resignation of James C. Wade, editor in chief of World's adult trade division. Mr. Wade first alerted the company to the existence of the memoirs early last summer.

According to publishing sources, Mr. Wade resigned after being excluded from the final meeting last Tuesday with General Gehlen's representative, Volker Hansen, by Christopher Shaw, World's president. In separate interviews, neither Mr. Wade nor Mr. Shaw would discuss any differences.

'Left Very Amicably'

"I left very amicably and very happily," Mr. Wade said, interrupting a visit to another publishing house where he was inquiring about a job. "Once the Gehlen book was taken care of, I simply wanted to change."

Mr. Shaw, reached at his summer home in East Hampton, L. I., confirmed that Mr. Wade had not been present at the Tuesday luncheon, but explained that this was because he had resigned the night before.

"He left very suddenly and I haven't talked to him," the company president said.

Other sources, who asked not to be identified, indicated that one reason for Mr. Wade's sudden departure was precisely that he had not been invited to participate in the conclusion of the deal after having spent some four months working on it. Some said the incident reflected a tendency by Mr. Shaw to place protocol ahead of the sensitivities of his editorial staff.

In addition, associates of Mr. Wade said that the 31-year-old editorial executive had become increasingly disenchanted with

Mr. Shaw's emphasis on backlist and reference books, whereas he preferred to work on new books of fiction and non-fiction. Among the books Mr. Wade edited are Herman Kahn's "The Year 2000," Dr. Bruno Bettelheim's "The Empty Fortress" and Malcolm Lowry's posthumous novel, "October Ferry to Gabriola."

Peter Ritner, vice president and director general of World's publishing division, who brought Mr. Wade to the company when the two men resigned from Macmillan two years ago, described the resignation as "a terrible personal loss for me and a great professional loss for World."

Mr. Wade's departure was also deplored by Martin P. Levin, chairman of World, who attributed the move to "our switching away from highly visible trade books to encyclopedias and general reference books."

A Working Luncheon

Discussing the agreement on the Gehlen memoirs, Mr. Levin said it was concluded Tuesday "when we exchanged a check for the complete manuscript." He said the transaction took place at a working luncheon that was also attended by the company's lawyers, several executives and George Bailey, an expert in German intelligence operations who has been acting as a consultant for World in the negotiations. Mr. Bailey, who was a European correspondent for the defunct The Reporter magazine, is completing a book for World titled "The Germans."

Mr. Levin said he expected the Gehlen book to be ready for publication in the United States next spring.

The Gehlen memoirs—particularly his contention that Hitler's deputy, Martin Bormann, was a Soviet agent during World War II—have generated sharp controversy in West Germany. Moreover, the Government in Bonn has warned that any disclosure of confidential information in the memoirs could lead to prosecution of the author and his publisher.